

REMARKS

Claims 1-29 and 31 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 17 is amended. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully appreciate the indication that claims 1-16, 22, 28, 29 and 31 are allowable.

The Office Action rejects claims 17-21, 23-27 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Haneda (U.S. Patent No. 5,537,188). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

In particular, Haneda fails to disclose or suggest an image forming apparatus that includes a latent image forming unit that forms a latent image on an image carrying body, a developing unit that visualizes the latent image using a developer, wherein a developer replenishment box is disposed in an upstream of a latent image writing position on the image carrying body, and an upper portion of the developer replenishment box is substantially higher than an upper portion of the image carrying body, as recited in independent claim 17. Support for this feature can be found in the specification at, for example, Fig. 9, where the developer replenishment box 5 and the image carrying body 1 satisfy this claimed feature, and an advantage of this feature is discussed in paragraph [0012].

Haneda teaches an image forming apparatus with a color developer cartridge and a process cartridge that are detachable from the apparatus and the process cartridge is prevented from being detached from the apparatus until the color developer cartridge is detached from the apparatus (Abstract). Moreover, the Office Action indicates that the developer replenishment box 204H is disposed in an upstream of a latent image writing position on the image carrying body 100 (Office Action, page 2, lines 8-11). However, a closer examination of Fig. 1 of Haneda indicates that the upper portion of the developer housing of the black developer housing 204H is at substantially the same level as the upper portion of the photoreceptor drum 100. It is thus clear that an upper portion of the black developer housing

204H of Haneda is not substantially higher than the upper portion of the photoreceptor drum 100. Thus, Haneda fails to disclose or suggest each and every feature of independent claim 17.

For at least this reason, independent claim 17, and its dependent claims, are patentable over Haneda. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-29 and 31 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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